

Message Text

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10
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 PC-01

AID-05 IO-13 OMB-01 SY-05 ACDA-07 OC-06 CCO-00 SAM-01

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R 200730Z JUL 76
FM AMCONSUL ASMARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4061
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON
COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN
COMIDEASTFOR
NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA
NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI
CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0569

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT ET
SUBJECT: EVENTS IN ERITREA: A ROUNDUP

REF: ASMARA 0551 (DTG 151350Z JUL 76)

1. DESPITE REPORTS OF CONTINUED LOW-LEVEL DISSIDENCE AMONG
ETHIOPIAN TROOPS HERE, ASMARA REMAINS QUIET AND ACTIVITY IS
NORMAL. RADIO ASMARA HAS STILL NOT RETURNED TO THE AIR,
CASTING FURTHER DOUBT ON THE EXCUSE OF TECHNICAL PROBLEMS. THE
CONVOY TO MASSAWA, FOUR DAYS LATE IN STARTING, DEPARTED ASMARA THE
AFTERNOON OF JULY 19. A FREQUENT VISITOR TO 2ND DIVISION HQ
REPORTS THAT THERE WERE NO PARATROOPERS IN EVIDENCE THE MORNING
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OF JULY 19; NORMALLY A SQUAD IS ON GUARD DUTY AND THE UNIT IS

BILLETED NEAR THE FRONT GATE OF THE HQ. THERE IS NO INDICATION, HOWEVER, THAT PARATROOPERS HAVE LEFT ASMARA.

2. THE NEWS THAT COL. FIKRU FROM HARRAR HAS BEEN APPOINTED TO REPLACE BG GETACHEW AS MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR WAS GREETED WITH MIXED FEELINGS BY ASMARA RESIDENTS. ONE SOURCE SAID THAT AS FIKRU HAD SERVED IN ERITREA BEFORE, HE WOULD AT LEAST UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION AND HOPEFULLY BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE PROBLEMS OF ERITREANS. A SENIOR ETHIOPIAN OFFICER SAID THAT FIKRU IS EXPECTED IN ASMARA IN THREE OR FOUR DAYS.

3. AS A BIZARRE INTERLUDE IN THE MIDST OF THE ARMY'S REPORTED INTERNAL STRIFE, THE 2ND DIVISION CONDUCTED A RELATIVELY ELABORATE BUT SMALL TRAINING EXERCISE IN THE OPEN COUNTRY BETWEEN KAGNEW TRACTS ECHO AND BRAVO. THE TWO-HOUR EXERCISE, WHICH CULMINATED ALMOST TWO WEEKS OF UNEXPLAINED PREPARATIONS IN THE AREA, INCLUDED SMALL UNIT INFANTRY TACTICS (ABOUT 150 PERSONNEL) AND CONCLUDED WITH A LIVE-FIRE MORTAR DISPLAY. THE LATTER ATTRACTION MUST HAVE BEEN AN EMBARRASSMENT TO THE ASSEMBLED SPECTATORS AS MANY OF THE ROUNDS WERE LONG AND WIDE OF THE TARGET, SEVERAL FALLING ABOUT 25 METERS FROM ONE OF THE UNUSED TOWERS AT TRACT BRAVO. OIC NAVCOMMUNIT ORALLY PROTESTED THIS INCIDENT TO 2ND DIV C/S, REQUESTING THAT WHEN SUCH EXERCISES ARE PLANNED IN THE AREA OF TRACT BRAVO, THAT PRIOR WARNING BE GIVEN TO AMERICAN PERSONNEL. THE OVERSIGHT WAS ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE C/S.

4. THE DELEGATION OF ERITREAN ELDERS WHICH LEFT ASMARA JULY 13 TO MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ELF (REFTEL) HAS NOT YET RETURNED TO ASMARA. THE DELEGATION, REPORTEDLY COMPRISED OF 13 OR 14 ELDERS, IS SAID TO HAVE RETURNED TO KEREN AND IS AWAITING AIR TRANSPORT TO ASMARA.
SLUTZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SUMMARIES, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ASMARA00569
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760278-0716
From: ASMARA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760742/aaaabkftf.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 ASMARA 551
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 FEB 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 FEB 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <09 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EVENTS IN ERITREA: A ROUNDUP
TAGS: PINS, PINT, ET
To: STATE ADDIS ABABA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006